

is—say, in the double journey, 1s. 6d. For going *twelve* double journeys a passenger would pay the full fare of eight. The Company, therefore, saves 9s., and loses two full double fares, which the traveller saves, besides collateral expenses! So much for the suspension of the return-ticket system, and the consequent economization and recruitment of the railway funds thereby.* The raising of fares is just as likely to increase their profits as this long-headed scheme appears to be.—Mr. Cox, the superintendent of the Electric Telegraph Company's works at Manchester, suggests that, for the prevention of railway accidents, the guard of every train should be provided with a portable telegraph, which, in case of any accident or emergency, he could attach to any of the wires, and signal any station for assistance. Such a suggestion has been repeatedly and long since made, but is none the worse for wear; indeed, it appears to be so feasible, and so likely to be useful, that it would probably not be easy for the railway direction to justify itself for not having long ago given heed to it. Portable telegraphs would cost something; that is the secret—though surely it should now be well known that accidents are even still more costly than would even the most abundant means of their prevention be.—The French Minister of Public Works has issued orders that for the prevention of accidents by railway, the employment of four-wheeled locomotives for passenger trains be interdicted, that every carriage do rest on six wheels at least, in order that if one of the axles should break, the carriage should still rest on supporters, and continue its course. Locomotives to be placed at the head of the train, and never behind. At least one carriage without passengers always to be placed at the head of each train of five carriages, and two carriages without passengers when the carriages in the train shall exceed five. Carriages with passengers never to be locked.—The Admiralty, at Mr. Ward's suggestion, intend having a system of dockyard railways introduced in place of teams, which cost 6,661*l.* per annum at Deptford, Woolwich, Chatham, Sheerness, Plymouth, Portsmouth, and Pembroke.—A tramway is now laid down on the pier at Southend, for which a small engine is to be provided. This pier, it will be recollected, is a mile and a quarter in length, and cost 42,000*l.*, though sold to the Eastern Counties for 17,000*l.* The Company have also been purchasing 30 acres of building ground adjoining it.—The bridge over the Witham, on the Lincoln line to Great Grimsby and Hull, is somewhat on the principle of the tubular bridge over Menai Straits. The weight of rails and traffic is supported by two girders of iron, which rest upon cross girders, extending from and fastened to two copper tubes, 6 feet in height, 18 inches wide, and stretching from pier to pier, bearing the weight of the whole.—The tunnel (in solid granite throughout) at Killiney Point, Bray, on the Dublin, Wicklow, Wexford, and Waterford, has been cleared through. The contractor is Mr. Burke.—On the Holyhead line, the Carnarvon tunnels on the contracts between Conway and Bangor are being arched over with brick.—About 240 men are employed on the Michelton tunnel of the Oxford and Worcester line, and a brickmaking-machine is at work on the spot, turning out 32 bricks a minute.—Three of the arches near Bridge-street, Homer-ton, on the East and West India Dock Junction gave way lately and killed two men and severely crushed a third, besides killing a couple of horses and doing other damage. The shores were said to have been too soon struck. The contractor is Mr. Jackson, of Pimlico.—On the tidal estuary of the Tay, at Broughty-ferry, below Dundee, a floating railway, or rather a railway float, is being made, with rails, and a length, breadth, and buoy-

ancy sufficient to carry a train 500 feet in length across the estuary, by steam power equal to 250 horses. Stationary engines on either side the frith will lower a id draw up the trains to the higher level of the line, the Edinburgh and Northern.—An embankment at Dumblane, on the Scottish Central, is said to have been carried away, and coaching for about seven miles rendered necessary.—A portion of an embankment on the Taff Vale line, near Merthyr, is also said to have given way, but the permanent way was soon restored.—The top stone of the Wharfedale viaduct, on the Leeds and Thirsk, has been laid. This viaduct, as we think has been already noted, consists of twenty-one arches, of 60 feet span each.—To obviate the frequent accidents from breaking of wheel-tires, a new wheel without tires, made of cast-iron, has been invented and patented, according to the *Manchester Examiner*, by Mr. R. Heath, of that city. It is cast, of course, in one piece, and "the difficulty to overcome," says our authority, "to make a wheel of cast-iron sufficiently strong, has been that of a nice calculation, so as to make it equal in all its parts, and to secure a mode of casting which ensures the contraction of the metal being equal in all parts. The test applied to try its strength was to hoist the wheel to a height of 14 feet, and then let it fall upon a bed of solid iron. The only effect upon it of this test was an indentation similar to that which wrought iron might be expected to discover. Another test was to let fall upon the boss, or centre portion of the wheel, a tup, or large ball of iron, of 9 cwt. from the same height; and this heavy mass bounded off without producing the least impression upon it. The patent wheel will be the same weight as those now in use, but may be made at a reduction of 40 per cent. in price."

STATE OF ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH-YARD, WESTMINSTER.

A MORE pestilential nuisance in this mighty metropolis can hardly exist than one immediately under the noses of the makers of our sanitary laws: this is the churchyard of Saint Margaret, Westminster, contiguous to the Houses of Parliament. Having undergone a few years vicinage to this locality, I may venture to affirm, from my own observation, that 300 corpses are about the number annually added to the limited area of this pest-spot. I have often witnessed scenes revolting to human feelings, when the grave-diggers were seeking an eligible space for another interment by forcing a borer, something like a huge gimblet, into the earth. An exclamation of "oh!" has escaped from their brutal lips when the iron rod broke the lid of a coffin, during this operation, and descended suddenly for a foot further in depth without exertion, doubtless piercing through the decaying remnant of some loved departed person, whose resting-place had been purchased there by sorrowing survivors with fees of gold.

And when a space is found where an addition to putrescent matter can be received, bones are turned up in heaps, with fragments of muscle attached, not yet decayed, and skulls intact. The grave-digger's spade has readily smashed these remnants of mortality, that the disgust of passers-by might not be excited. Oftentimes there are three or four of these foul cavernous openings emitting their exhalations to poison the atmosphere: on a summer's day, with the steaming vapour called up still stronger by the heat of the solar rays. As every fresh coffin displaces a portion of this highly-infected earth, it is usually wheeled off and placed in a heap against the railings on the north side of Henry the Seventh's Chapel, where it remains until the sun and rain occasion its dispersion.

I would here propose a question for the scientific inquirers of the day to resolve. Do not the mephitic odours and noxious gases arising from this immense mass of decaying human matter in the churchyard act on the surface of the stonework, which has so much crumbled on the front of the north transept of the abbey—the greater part of the balustrade above the first range of windows having totally disappeared? The disintegration of many other parts is rapidly progressing, and the more recently-

renewed work of Henry the Seventh's Chapel is fast dropping off.

When the wind is westerly, the breeze is so sickening that the inhabitants of the apartments above the Rolls' Court, and in the other parts of this building fronting the churchyard, close their windows to shut it out, be the weather ever so fine. The cabmen even feel its baneful influence, and, after nightfall, urge their jaded horses, when they have taken up "a member," to gallop through the *gus*, as this part from the doors of the House of Commons to Bridge-street is named by them, that they may get quickly away from the deleterious atmosphere.

Yet this is the air which our senators respire when they leave the Houses of Parliament, with fatigued lungs after long speeches, abstinence of refreshment, or dreary hours of attendance.

As wise women say, there is no sore without a salve; and not to disturb the mementoes of the dead, the gravestones might form part of an uniform pavement, well cemented, with those added to fill the interstices at the joinings; but at least a couple of feet in depth of the earth should be removed, and a layer of concrete placed thereon to level the ground and prevent its sinking into inequalities of surface.

AN IDLER IN LONDON.

RUINS OF FENAGH ABBEY.

COUNTY LEITRIM, IRELAND.

SIR,—During a sojourn of some two or three months in this neighbourhood, I have had an opportunity of visiting Fenagh Abbey, one of these interesting ruins so numerous in this and the adjoining county.

Fenagh Abbey is situated a few yards off the high road leading from Mohill to the village of Ballinamore. It is perched on a slight eminence, and presents little or nothing to the casual observer beyond the cyclopean character of the masonry, and the usual accompaniment to all ruins in Ireland—the latticed ivy—now forming a rich and luxuriant marginal border on the upper portions of the walls. The traveller, however, who keeps in view "the days of auld langsyne," will be amply repaid on entering the precincts of this time-worn little spot.

The east window was of four-lights, with a circle in the head divided into six compartments, with a trefoil opening in each. (One of the mullions has fallen, and this loss has caused a slight change in the tracery, by displacing the stones forming the principal or circular compartment of the window. Under the sill of the window outside, is a richly moulded belt or string course, across the end of the church, the central bead carved as rope-work, and one end grasped by the figure of a dog.

Ledwich, in his antiquities, relates an absurd tradition about the "rope and dog," making the dog a demon which the monks of old had caught in the act of pulling down their little church during the progress of building, and as an example to evil-doers, they had the "old-boy" tied by a rope and carved on the walls of the abbey to commemorate the event.

The date is probably the close of the thirteenth century. Two sculptured heads I found in the adjoining graveyard strongly resemble the engraving of a head in page 176 of "Paley's Manual of Gothic Architecture;" these heads appear designed to receive the hood moulding of the entrance doorway, not a vestige of which now remains. About one-third the length of the church (from west end) is covered in with a rubble stone vault, in good preservation.

At half a mile north of the abbey is found one of those rude memorials of ages long past over a "cronelech," supposed to have existed long prior to the introduction of Christianity into these countries.

I had nearly forgotten to mention a sedilia in the south wall, having only two seats, an arrangement rather unusual.

Mohill.

J. K.

COMPETITION.—The time for lodging plans for the drainage of Guildford has been extended from 1st to 15th January next.

* Even the first week's trial of the ticket thus played upon the confidence of passengers of return-tickets—and, of course, long ere they could have had time to recal previous more or less permanent arrangements founded on the faith of the return-ticket system, and thus escape altogether out of the churches dashed forth so suddenly to ensure them, fully justified the prediction of all common-sense people, not blinded by the unreflecting greed of an overreaching self-interest. On the very day on which the return-tickets were abolished, 15 miles of new line were opened, yet the traffic returns of the following week without return tickets, and with the 15 miles of new line, were just 53*l.* 1*s.* 10*d.* less than they were the week before with return tickets, and without the 15 miles of new line!